Unemployment due to new catering policy

†1734. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that due to the new catering policy of the Railways there is a danger of hundreds of people being rendered unemployed who are running small catering units at railway stations; and

(b) if so, whether Government would also think about hundreds of people who are running small catering units while preparing new catering policy so that they do not face the danger of becoming unemployed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRIR. VELU): (a) and (b) There is no danger of hundreds of people being rendered unemployed who are running small catering units at railway stations as a result of implementation of New Catering Policy—2004 *w.e.f.* 12.10.2004. All the licencees whose present contracts have expired or are due to expire will be able to participate in the new tenders/selection through application against the existing and fresh licences, subject to eligibility criteria. Employment opportunities will not decrease as catering units are not being closed.

Disadvantageous railway lines

†1735. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of such non-viable railway branch lines in the country;

(b) the details thereof; State-wise; and

(c) the action to be taken by Government regarding these railway lines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) There are 115 uneconomic branch lines in the country.

(b) Such information is maintained Railway Zone-wise only and not State-wise.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) Steps being taken include curtailment in staff strength, reduction in number of train services, dismantling of redundant sidings, introduction of rail bus services, observance of economy in operation etc.

Rail bridges in Bihar

†1736. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of rail bridges on which rail tracks have been damaged due to flood this year in Bihar;

(b) the amount of loss to railways by it;

(c) by when the work of reconstruction of those damaged bridges and rail tracks would be completed; and

(d) the action taken by Government for permanent solution of the problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Statistics for Bridge Works are maintained Railway-wise and not State-wise. Four bridges were damaged due to flood in this year on East Central Railway which serves the State of Bihar also. These damaged bridges have been temporarily restored for passage of traffic. The rebuilding of these damaged bridges is expected to take about two years time. However, there has been washout/breaches on bridge approaches in the month of June to July 2004 due to flash flood on certain sections falling in Bihar State served by East Central and Eastern Railway. These washout and breaches have been repaired and restored for traffic on different dates during the period from July to October 2004. On vulnerable locations Railways has planned works like provision of additional waterways along with rebuilding of existing bridges, provision of guide bunds, raising of banks etc. as permanent solution to overcome the problem. These works shall be taken up in phased manner. Sometime flash flood is caused due to breaches of the marginal bunds on rivers in up stream of Railway lines. Maintenance of such marginal bunds, river training works and Railway Affecting Works lies with the State Government. Concerning State Government has been pursued time to time for expeditious completion of River Training Works and proper maintenance of Railway Affecting Works.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.